

2002-2003 Report of Accomplishments Columbia Conservation District



Natural Resource Improvements in 2003 - Summary

- Installed 5 livestock watering systems utilizing a mix of CREP, Implementation and Model Watershed funds.
- Developments removed cattle from 13 miles of stream riparian and affectively opened 1800 acres of range to better grazing utilization and management.
- These systems removed cattle from concentrated use of the riparian, which should reduce stream bank erosion, fecal contamination, and nutrient loading while allowing forest riparian development, which should allow riparian filtration, water shading (water temperature reduction), future large woody material recruitment and floodplain conveyance.



Livestock removal from CREP
Stream includes
well ,trough, fence, planting

Mission of the Columbia Conservation District

- Provide the needed support to Columbia County residents so that their activities will enhance the regions natural resources while protecting and promoting their health, safety and social values.

Water Quality Implementation

- Provided support for 6 producers to transition to an no-till/minimum-till rotational system on 1,037 acres of production cereal grain resulting in potential soil savings of 14,055 tons.
- Provided support for installation of 4 grass waterways located on both sides of the break between the Tucannon and Touchet watersheds. Total size is 2,676 feet draining 148 acres. Benefit is a retention of soil at it source and a reduction concentrated gully erosion and soil transport to surface waters.

Basic Funding

- Provides support for weather event monitoring and it actual impacts on soil retention. This monitoring has shown the transition to no-till – minimum-tillage to positively affect the soil ability to retain moisture thereby minimizing movement of soil by erosion.

Local Funding

- Currently Columbia Conservation District only local funding source is from issuing agricultural field burn permits. This program supports the utilization of burning as a management tool for cereal crop producers. Burning provides for continuous crop rotations without inversion tillage thereby retaining sediments at their source and minimizing sediment transport to surface waters resulting in improved water quality.

Professional Engineering

- Assessment of conveyance performance on the 3 irrigation diversions within the City of Dayton. Also worked with steering committees from each ditch to develop diversion alternatives to the traditional gravel push-up dams constructed, on an annual bases, to insure water delivery to the ditches.
- Assessed 1 private irrigation ditch conveyance performance.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- *Protected 321 acres and 17 miles of ESA listed streams by removing cattle and installing the riparian forest buffer practice.*
- *12 miles of fencing and 41,740 trees were planted to establish riparian forest buffers under 17 new contracts. 5 of these contracts had livestock watering facilities partially funded under our Implementation and Model Watershed programs.*
- *Benefits are a reduction in stream bank erosion, fecal coliform levels, and nutrient pollutants while increase riparian filtration function, canopy cover (potential reduction in water temperature), large woody material recruitment, and floodplain connectivity.*

Irrigation Efficiencies

- *Efficiencies assessments were completed on 43 systems.*
- *4 major systems are moving toward improvement contracting with ~ 8 cfs in water savings. Savings will impact 28.5 miles of the Tucannon River and 4 ESA listed species.*

Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration

- *Improvement of potential ESA river water flow by assessing and assisting water users to install NOAA Fisheries, USF&WS, and WDFW compliant water withdrawal screens affectively reducing potential for “take”. 68 screen and flow meter assessments and designs were completed with additional program sign-ups. Screen/flow meter systems are currently being built for installation at the beginning of the next irrigation season.*
- *Assisted DOE with 66 water right verifications.*

Community Collaboration & Coordination

- *Facilitated and/or participated with active local citizenry involvement in HB 2496 Lead Entity for WRIA’s 32 & 35; SE Regional Salmon Board; CBFWA Sub-regional team for NWPPC; HB2514 Watershed Planning for WRIA’s 32 & 35; WCC & DOE Livestock Influenced Water Quality Task Force; WCC CREP Task Force; Tucannon Subbasin Management Plan (lead); and Walla Walla Subbasin Management Plan.*

Information & Education

- *Conducted 2 water flow workshops with WDOE. 67 individual water users attended.*
- *Conducted an annual Winter Education Day attended by 107 producers on current issues in conservation and economics of production agriculture.*
- *Held a tour for the NWPPC and SRFB on instream projects installed since 1996.*
- *Held a producer tour with 42 participants on current production agriculture trends*
- *Provide Ag. Education curriculum to 451 county students in K-6th grades.*

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices



NOAA Fisheries, USF&WS, and WDFW
New specification compliant fish screen